



Ron Powers

Alternative video flexes its muscles

An experience in personal television happened at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Friday. For those who have never thought to link the word "personal" with the word "television," the experience will be repeated Saturday at the YWCA, 37 S. Wabash.

The event was the Women's Video Festival, a daylong showing of documentaries, narratives, interviews, testimonies and other forms of intimate expression, recorded on half-inch videotape. The subject matter in this case was women. But the collection of tapes will be of interest to anyone curious about how television is finally embracing forms other than that of electronic salesman and bedtime-story teller.

Half-inch videotape essentially is a new and relatively low-cost phase of equipment that allows for a photography form similar to filmmaking. The tapes are played back on turntables attached to TV sets. Most videotape people presently prefer to show their work only in workshop settings, such as Friday's, to specific audiences of people with a common interest. But with the increasing interest in public television toward videotapes (Ch. 11 telecast Top Value Television's videotape coverage of the political conventions in the summer of 1972) and the growth of the cable industry — which is geared to special-interest audiences — videotape TV is clearly a wave of the future.

Friday's event at Chicago Circle had about 20 tapes made by women from around the country. Subjects included a look at prostitution, "a documentation of the commercialization of the marriage industry as seen at a products fair for young women," a women's poetry reading, documents of the National Lesbian Conference held in California last April, a conversation among waitresses and a look at the shooting of a centerfold for Gallery Magazine.

The cool medium — in Chicago

"VIDEOTAPE IS NOT a hot thing in Chicago yet," said Lilly Ollinger, a member of a Chicago-based group called Videopolis. "It's hot in New York and San Francisco; there's a lot going on there. We wanted to get this workshop together to show people how to use the equipment, and also show them what can be captured on videotape."

"Over-the-air television has become incredibly contrived. You can't get a sense of the reality of anyone you see on the screen. Videotapes are personal; they're real. You can see people with their little quirks, their charming mannerisms. You get to see who they are — and who the interviewer is, too."

One example of "seeing who the interviewer is" may be found in the Gallery centerfold tape. Both the camera work and interviewing were handled simultaneously by Anda Korsts, a member of Videopolis and a leading practitioner of videotapes in Chicago.

Ms. Korsts took her camera directly into the studio for a photo session with a young model from Tennessee; there emerged some deft character contrasts between the callow, naive girl (whose idea of the Good Life is to be Cybill Shepherd) and the hip, money-oriented patter of Gallery publisher Ron Fenton. ("She has a long, slender body," Fenton intones. "She photographs well; she has a young fresh look—she has a very unusual look when you look at her through a trans-

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"Not everybody among us thinks that over-air television is the optimum place for videotapes yet," said Ms. Korsts as she watched her tape. "The big hassles are still coming—hassles with unions, with station engineers. The hard times are still ahead.

"But the Top Value Television tapes set a precedent for what we can do over the air. As for this workshop, what lies ahead is that we'll repeat the tape showings in a number of places, then donate the use of the tapes to the tape library here at the U. of I." The library will make the tapes available—selectively—to student groups and other videotape projects.

"We're still trying to find out what our channels are," said Ms. Korsts, "and develop those channels."

Whatever those channels turn out to be, they decidedly will be a quantum leap away from Channels 2, 5, 7, 9, 11. . .

Turning on, tuning in

PUBLIC-TV (Ch. 11 locally) will telecast a special program about aging, Wrinkles, Birthdays and Other Fables, at 8 p.m. Monday. The subject matter is provocative to say the least, but a cast of entertainment stars headed by Flip Wilson makes it all seem just a little too fey.



CHOCOLAT CAT CAKE

Shaped in the Hallow-
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\$4.25



PUMPKIN P

Spicy filling
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